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## A relation of the commitment and long unjust Imprisonment,

of James Potter, in the Common Jayle at Winchester, with the imprisoning of his Sister Ann Potter for Tythe, by Edward Bentall Priest of Baghurst, and the taking away of her brother Richard Potters goods for the same Tythe, for which he impiiloned her.

Also the imprisoning of Elizabeth Streeter, with two of her Husbands servants, occasioned by John Corbet Priest of Bramshot.

With a few words to all, especially to the inhabitants of Baghurst and Bramshot, to turn from those covetous hirelings which have long deceived the, & return unto the Lord, and hearken to, obey and follow the Light of Christ: given to lead them out of the waies of darkness, sin and unrighteousness, that redemption and restoration to life, they may come to know, and witness.

James Potter.

**T**He Lord is my witness that what I have herein written, is not in envy to the person of any man, neither is it in revenge because of what I have suffered by any person herein mentioned, who have learned not to render evil for evil; but for the pretious truths sake for which I suffer, (for which my life is not dear unto me) and that the simple honest desires in any may not be betrayed, through the subtlety of such who make lies their refuge, and with deceit and falsehood, do seek to cover themselves, that their wickedness in persecuting the Servants of God, may not appear before the eyes of the people, accusing them to be the cause of their long unjust imprisonments, pretending law and Justice, when the law is cast behind their backs, and the just suffers by them both within and without; whose one wills hath been their law, for most of their actions against the servants of Christ the seed of enmity ruling in them, by which they are led, to persecute, imprison, and act such cruelty and tyranny upon them, that the like in former ages hath not been heard of.

And first as concerning my own imprisonment let the Reader impartially consider, and in the Light of the Son of God the just and equal balance, weigh and try the ground and cause of it, when I was in the vain conversation in the liberty of the flesh, spending my pretious time in vain sports and delights, by which the innocent principle of God in me was kept in bondage, and much wickedness committed, and the Lord greatly dishonoured, I say when I was in that State and condition unreconciled to God, in the fallen nature, where all the world are, with whom I had my conversation, I had then the love of the world, and the praise and estimation amongst men: and for all my actions in that state and condition, whilst I could bow to deceit, respect persons, and give flattering titles, and follow and uphold the covetous greedy hirelings, by which the simplicity in me was long betrayed; I was never so much as questioned by any ruler whatsoever, but so soon as it pleased the Lord in his everlasting love, to call me out of that conversation (wherein I had walked) by the light of his Son, which had from a child judged and condemned me for unrighteousness; often bringing fear and trouble upon me, when I walked in disobedience, to what I was by it convinced to be evil, and to turn from the covetous hirelings, which I saw in the Light to be deceivers and destroyers of the souls of people, then I began to suffer, how did the sea then rage, and cast up mire and dirt what abominable lies, flanders, and false reports, were vented forth against me, crying as it were in the Prophet Jeremiah's dayes, report and we will re-

ort, both Priest and Justice, by whom I was imprisoned, joyning with the rest of the reporters, to make truth and me odious, by wicked slanders, and false accusations, and to stop the farther spreading of truth, our meetings were forbidden by *William Withers*, that we should not meet together to seek the Lord, at my fathers house nor at any other place within the parish of *Bighurst*, but his command being not obeyed, he sent a Warrant, *Richard Kingmill* also joyning with him, wherein was also severall false accusations against me and the people of the Lord; forbidding again our meetings, pretending suspition, and that the end of our meetings was by armes and force to assault, and invade their lives, or lively hoods having cause or rather forced a man falsly to swear against me, with several things of the same nature, from the same root of enmity in them against the seed and people of God, but their principal thing against me was for reading a paper in the steeplehouse: in which also I was falsly accused that I had made open & publike disturbance to the parish Minister (so called) and his doctrine, which many there present can witness to be false, for I said nothing of his doctrine neither did I disturb him, but sat down peaceably in the place until he had ended, & then read the paper to the people, the hireling going away not likeing to hear the truth therein declared against him; and then to cover their false accusation, being asked by one of the (parish as the man himself informed me) why he did complain that I did disturb him, when as so many could witness it was no such thing, he said that he was disturbed in spirit, but that will not cover their false accusation which was that I had made open and publike disturbance to him & his doctrine as afore written: and if he were a Minister of Christ (as he would have people believe) and had received that peace which Christ gave to his Disciples *Joh. 14. 27.* he could not have been disturbed in spirit, but the priest hath herein shewed this spirit is of the Devil, and of the world (wherein is the trouble) & not of Christ (wherein is peace) that was disturbed by the sight of a man, coming in peaceably among them, or for the reading a paper in sobernes and the fear of the Lord.

So the warrant being served on me, I passed with the Officer to *Will. Withers* house but because I had not brought some to be bound with me for the good behaviour, & to such things wherein he might have ensnared me, & have caused the living truth of God to suffer, he would not suffer me to come before him, to answer to any thing of which I was accused, but was in a passion as himself acknowledged, & so shewed himself to be of the same spirit with the priest that was disturbed, & this spirit could never the servants of God obey, but alwaies testified against, both in Rulars, Priests, and people; and so by it hath alwaies suffered as the Scriptures of truth doth witness.

So shortly after, by the same warrant, I was had to the Common Jayle at *Winchester*, & deliverey into the hands of the Jaylor to be kept a prisoner amongst Thieves, Murthreys, and transgredors, & at the Assizes following with the same company amongst whom I had been kept, I was had to the Bar to receive my tryal as was pretended, but then did none openly appear in Court, or to my face, to witness the things whereof they had accused me, but because I could not bow to proud *Hamer's* spirit in Judge *Nicholas* that wicked man, in putting off my hit, I was by him fined 5*l.* and returned again to prison: for which wickedness by that unijt judge acted against me, was demanded above 40. s. fees for his Clerks and others belonging to his Court, besides the Jaylors fees. So because I cannot obey his unrighteous decree acted by him in the power of darkness, through envy

against

against the living truth of God, & me his servant, nor uphold such tyranny ex-tortion, and oppression, but stand a witness for the Lord against it; I have been ever since kept prisoner, before and since the said Assizes, for the time of 2 years, in an nasty stinking unwholesome place, where through the mercy of the Lord, my life hath been preserved, having been often sick, to the much weaking and decaying of my outward body, being sometime near unto death, but the Lord is with me by whose power I have been preserved, who is pleading the cause of his people against the oppresour, who hath and will overturn until righteous-ness be set up in the earth, and the beast and the false Prophet (which hath made war with the Saints, which all the world is worshipping and wondring after) receive their portion in the lake of fire, which is the second death.

And as I by lies and false accusations was cast into prison, so th same lies hath been made use of to keep me in prison, for when my imprisonment have been enquired into by such who were then in power, then hath the false accusations recorded in the warrant been returned against me, & much more as untrue and never proved, and farther it may be considered, that whereas I was cast into prison (through the complaint of Priest Bentall) who had broken no law, there being then no law against any that should speak in their sleepchouses, but onely such as shold speak in the time of the priests speaking, the which I did not, but stayed till he had ended his divination, before I spake or read any thing, so the priest contrary to the law of the land, (which gives liberty to all that profess faith in Christ to meet together and not to be hindred by any), caused 3 Bay-liffs, wicked persons to enter into Rich. Potters house in the time of their meeting, and arrested my sister Ann Potter and 2 more, by which means the said Ann Potter was cast into prison because she could not for conscience sake pay Tyth, to uphold this covetous hireling, to deceive & to destroy the souls of people, whose fruits makes him manifest to be one of the false Prophets that Christ bid beware of, a ravening wolf, in sheep cloathing, thorns & thistles being the fruit brought forth by him, as may plainly appear, to all the sober minded, by what is herein written.

Having thus cast the said Ann Potter into prison, he proceeds on in his wicked practises, and causeth something to be drawn, as if he had an order out of the *Chainy Court*, with Francis Rivets name to it, who is judge of the Court, by which he caused another most desperate wicked person, to enter into Rich. Potters house, and take away his goods; the said Rich. shortly coming to Winchester prison to me, I with him went to Francis Rivet, (he being at that time at the Court afore written) and laid before him what the priest had caused to be committed, (to wit) the taking away of Rich. Potters goods) and told him that his name was written to their pretended order, but he denied the action, & laid it was done unknown to him, and much blamed the Priests Attorney one Edward Harfield of Winchester, who said the priest had given the Court Bond to save them harmless but Francis Rivet said it was very unjust and contrary to the Law, and said that he would examine the matter, and would stop their proceedings, and since, said he had taken order to make them return the goods, the which was not performed.

But the priest after all this, having gotten something in writing from the said Court against Ann Potter for the tithe demanded, & for which she was imprisoned, he forthwith himself & his wife & 2 of his sons, with 3 more like a party of plun-tering soldiers, or as a troop of robbers, Horses, entered into my brother Rich. Pot-

ers backside when he was from home, & hove a gate off the hooks and took away of the said Rich, cattel, three cowes, & one calfe, and two heifers, which after were valued at 17 l. vvhile as the tithe demanded of *Ann Potter* vvas valued by the priests Tenant, vvhio did rent the parsonage (so called) but at 5 l. vvhio also for his ovvn ends overvalued it, near or altogether at twise the rate, thereabouts do sell for.

And yet the priest like one of those greedy dumb dogs, that can never have enough, If a. 56. vvas not satisfied, for some of them said that the cattle which they had taken vwould not satisfie them, & would have gone into the stable to have taken a horse and into the dwelling house for other goods (the doors being lockt) & vven they went avvay said it vwould be a further charge for they must come again.

So the said Rich, coming home on the same day, vvent to the cattle vvhile the priest and his company vwith them and scised on them, saying they vvere his, then the chief Bayliff, one *Cradock* of *Winchester* asked him vwhether he vwould make felony of it, and said he vwould go to the Justice with him, and then my brother *Rich*, required him so to do, and then he presently refused, and would not, proving himself a lyer like his master the priest; so my brother passed to *William Wister* called a Justice, and laid the matter before him, who used many words to perswade him not to proceed against them, mentioning the words of Christ, if any man take thy cloake, let him have thy coat also, which though that Scripture be owned by us, who can with patience suffer the spoyling or taking away of his goods, without envy or revenge, yet the law being added because of transgression, and the end of magistracy being to be a terror to the evil doer, and a praise to them that do well, and he being in the place to do Justice required Justice of him, against the transgressors that had taken away his cattle, telling him that he did look on it to be felony, who at last told him that if he would take his oath that the goods was his, and that it was feloniously taken from him, he would give him a warrant to have them brought before him, so because he could not go out of the doctrine of Christ nor break his command to swear, he could have no warrant from him, but came away without.

And now seeing the priest hath taken away my brothers cattel, pretending to be my sisters, of whom the tithe was demanded, for which he had imprisoned her; this I declare that the cattle taken away by the priest, and his company, was not my sisters, but as really his own as any penny-worth of goods left him, or the cloathes which he weareth: and this I affirme in the presence of God, and to all people who have learned the truth, and dare not ly, nor affirm that which is not true, though such things are lightly esteemed by *Edward Bentall* priest, who can say and unsay, and speak words and when they turn to his shame, deny them again, who said before many of the Parish, that if he had thought the parsonage of *Baghurst* had not been worth 8 score pound, or 7 score snd 10 l. a year, he would not have come thither, and when I told him of it, & charged it against him at *Winchester*, he most impudently denied it, and told me that I lyed several times, so I told him that several had spoken it, and I belie ve would witness it, and he told me again that it was a ly& that none would speak it, and two of those which I mentioned to him, were *Thomas Smith* and *Rich. Dean*, which I have since spoken with, who still affirmeth it, and others with them, can witness it to be truth to the priests shame, who is a lyer and a denyer of the truth, and so of his father the Devil, who abode not in the truth, but was a lyer from the beginning.

Notwithstanding the Priest hath taken away so many cattell, and goods besides from my brother, neare if not more then four times the value of the tithe which he demanded of my sister, and for which he cast her into prison, yet he cannot afford to pay his servant Raynold Wheate the Keeper of the prison, whom he employed in his fathers works of da:knels, (to wit) to keep the servant of the Lord in prison for him; but shee is still kept prisoner by the said Raynold Wheate for thirteen shillings four pence fees, besides two pence a day and night he demands for houseroome (he being a covetous wicked hardened ungodly man) who hath no lodging, nor any thing else of him, so because she cannot give him money for unjustly keeping her self in prison, nor uphold such cursed covetousnes, oppression, and extortion, shee hath been kept prisoner by him 24. weeke, where she yet remaineth.

*Here followeth some thing of the comitting, and imprisoning of two of Henry Streeters servants, and Elizabeth Streeter his wife, occasioned by John Corbet Priest of Bramshot.*

Richard Baker and William Baker, two of Henry Streeters servants, speaking some words against John Corbet Priest of Bramshot, (who had caused a cow to be taken from Robert Bidell, worth, four pound for the tithe of about five or six Acres of land, for which was never payed above 16s. for which words spoken against this unrighteous action, John Corbet procured a warrant, from John Hook called Justice, where by they were committed to the common Goale at Winchester, contrary to the Law, and being neither called, nor suffered to appear, (according to their warrant) at neither of two Sessions, nor any of their accusers appeared to witness against them, at last were kept in prison several weeks by Francis Rivets order, judge of the last Sessions, to make them promise to go home, who had no home but thir masters service, the which they were unjustly taken out of, and kept in prison about half a year, their master being not engaged to receive them again, nor they to go to him; three more of the Lords servants, being then in prison, which were taken up as they were going about their lawfull callings and imployments, and committed to prison by John Bulkley as wanderers, having been kepe upon the same account many moneths, to make them promise to go home, of which more largely hath been declared in print already.

Also Henry Streeters wife Elizabeth Streeter, being passing on a first day of the week, towards a meeting, with several other friends, and meeting the Priest, John Corbet with his wife and others, as they were passing along, about half a mile from the Steeple House, and some words passing betwixt a friend & John Corbet, she also spake some words of truth to him, telling him that he was a murtherer, who is one of them that destroyeth soules for dishonest gain, as may appear by his own words, who a little before did acknowledge, that he did sin both in praying and preaching, *and the wages of sin is death,* (mark) the wages of John Corbets praying and preaching,) and all sin is of the Devil who was a murtherer from the beginning (mark again but) J. corbet, who sins in his Ministry. Ministers from the Devil the root and ground of sin, from whence it springs, and so must needs murther, and destroy the soules of such as hear him; for the which words spoken by her, John Corbet complained that he was disturbed, and procured a warrant for her, from John Hoyle also, and at the Sessions following, how much did

*John Hook* and *Robert Ransalls* appear to be the Priests servants, to do his worke and satisfie his will, to impisfon the lervant of the Lord; though not any one gave oach, that he was disturbed, or that she spake wilfully or maliciously to him, according to that Act, which they pretended they acted by; and when they laid it on her they said it needed not, and when the Ju<sup>y</sup> would have stood for her, they put that by, and put them forth and subjecfed them to their wills, and *John Champus Clarke* of the Sessions, being ready to serve th<sup>e</sup>ir wills, and for his own filthy lucre, to make a prey on the innocent, wrt something, and gave into the hand of the foreman of the Ju<sup>y</sup>, yet that did not serve their turn, for wh<sup>n</sup> they had so far subjecfed him to wrong the innocent, the Lord stopt his mouth, that he could not give in his verdict, but as *John Champion* knowing their wills, and what they would have done, stood before him, and another behinde him; and told him what he shold say; so when that was done, she was by *Robert Ransalls* judge of the Sessions fined five pound, & committed to the common goal, from her Slicking Child, to be kept in a natty stinking unwholsome place, unfitting for man or woman to be kept in, untill she should pay the said fine of five pound, and fees alſo (as was returnd on their Callender,) which is contrary to the said act also, (if the priest had been wilfully disturbed) which is five pound the one halfe for the iſe of the protector, and the other halfe for him that shold sue for it, or else to be kept for ſome time in the house of correction not exceeding ſix moneths,

Also ſince *Elizabeth Streeter* hath been in prison, her husband hath had his goods twice taken from him by the Priests diſciples, who learn of them, li it, one of his cattle taken away by ſuch as are called Church-wardens of *Hendly* parish, for casting a bell, and mending the Maffe house, and afterward a house haſteſſe, and a harrow, by the Church-wardens of *Bramſhot* (ſo called) as was pretended for mending the Maffe-house alſo.

Oh ye inhabitants of *Bighurst Bramſhot* and others, that are hearing and upholding these covetous greedy hirelings, behold your teachers, Christ Jesus the Light of the world faith by their fruits you ſhall know them, *Do men gather Grapes of Thoernes, or figs of Thiftles*, doth not theſe their actions proceed from the corrupt tree, that brings forth the evil fruit, behold their families, how doth they goveine their own houses, what uſe is made of the fruit of your hard labours, by them taken from you; (conſider) doth not they with the rest of their brethren, waste and conſume the Creætures of God upon their laſts, covetous opprefſors, deſtroyers of the creation, themſelves and families, living ſoftly upon others hard labours, in pride, idlenesse, and exēſe, are they not ſuch as the Apoſtle ſpeaks of *Pvit. 3.19. Whose God is their belly, whose glory is in their shame, who mindes earthly things*, theſe are them that many are crying up and running after, and that the Rulers uphold (by casting the ſervants of God in prison) calling them Orthodoxy Divines, Godly Ministers, wicked blaſphemey to ſpeak it, O ye rulers are theſe men Godly, or Godlike, that are found in theſe practiſes, did ever any of the Ministers of Christ live in theſe things, nay they did not covet any mans ſilver or gold, or apparel, *Act<sup>s</sup>. 23.20.* but preached the Gofpel freely, as they had freely received of the Lord, they did not run to carnall Magiſtrates to uphold them, nor rend and take away mens goods, as theſe deceivers, and their bethen have done, nor receive any thing of any, but what was freely communicated

nicated to them by such as they freely administered the gospel unto, but these deceivers, and their brethren forcibly takes it away from such who receive not of their Ministry, are they not in the steps of the false prophets, and deceivers, that the true prophets, Christ and his Apostles declared against : Do not they seek their gain from their quarter, like the sleepy watchmen, and greedy dumb dogs, that the Prophet *Isaiah* declared against : *Isaiah* 5:6. is it not a common thing for them to run from place to place, to increase their hire, as these Priests hath done ; feeding of the fat, and cloathing with the wool, *Ezekiel* 34. speaking peace to such, as put into their mouthes, but such as put not into their mouthes, prepare war against them, *Mica*. 3. tear away their goods, and cast them into prison, and there keep them until death, as several in *England* hath been, going in the way of *Cain*, to envy, and to murther, and running greedily after the error of *Balaam*, who loved the wages of unrighteousnes, *Jude* 11. *2 Peter*, 2. 15. exceeding in wickednesse, cruelty, and tyranny, all the Hirelings, and false Prophets, that we read of in the Scriptures, and all yee that are cying up, and upholding these wicked Priests, and the rest of that generation of painted Serpents, ravening Wolves in sheeps clothing, who with good words and fair speeches have long, and are still deceiving you, stealing the good words of the Prophets, Christ and his Apostles, and selling it to the people making the Scriptures given forth from the Spirit of Truth, a cloak to cover their covetous practises, and ungodliness ; adding to it their own private interpretations, meanings, and constructions, and so wresting it to their own destruction, and yours also if you turn not from them, who speak a divination of their hearts, and not from the mouthes of the Lord, therefore in the Name and fear of the Lord, I say unto you, come out from them, and be noe longer led by them, lest you for ever perish with them, for verily the Lord God is weary of bearing their iniquity, who is now arisen to make inquisition for the blood of the just, that cryeth for vengeance upon their heads; and verily his hand shall not spare, neither shall his eye pity, untill he hath taken vengeance on them, who hath corrupted the earth, filled it with violence, robbery, cruelty, tyranny, oppression, and all unrighteousnes ; who are daily stirring up the Rulers, and as it were enslaving them to their corrupt wills, to uphold them in their cursed practises, and works of darknes, by persecuting and casting into prison, the dear servants and children of the Lord.

Therefore I say again, come out from them ; and be no longer deceived by them, for verily they that partake with them in their sins, ( and will not be warned ) shall pe take with them of their plagues, which will suddenly come upon them ) and turn your mindes to the light of Christ in you, the faithfull and true witness which judgeth & condemneth you in secret, for all your unrighteousnes, that by it you may be led out of the world, and wayes of unrighteousnes, to Christ the Saviour, from whence it comes who is given for a Covenant to the people ; for a light to the Gentiles, *Isaiah* 42. 6. Who is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, *John* 3. 9. the Prophete that *Moses* wrote of, that whosoever shall not hear in all things should be destroyed, *Deut*. 3. Who is the way to the father, who saith I am the light of the World, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life, *John* 3. 12. ( marke ) shall not walk in darkness, the way out of Darknesse is to follow the light, and this I testify in the Name of the Lord, that there is no other way, neither shall you ever come

out of darkness, nor receive power from God to over come your sins, by which you are led captive by the God of the world until you believe in love, obey and follow the light which sheweth and discovereth unto you your sins, and judgeth, and condemneth in secret for them, and will be the eternall condemnation of all that continue in disobedience unto it, for unto him that is the Light of the world, is all power both in heaven and earth, committed, now therefore bow and bend before him, lest you be for ever consumed by him, feed no longer upon dead words, airy imaginations and carnal conceivings, ( of the Saints words given forth from the life ) with which your teachers have long deceived you ; but returne, hearken, obey, that your soules may live, that the bread of life, and the waters of life you may come to know, and partake of, and be nourished by it to life eternall, this is the day of your Visitation, and salvation, if you will receive it, therefore whiles you have time prize it, trifle away no longer your precious time on that which will perish ; for the Lords Spirit will not alwaies strive with such as goes on in rebellion against him, therefore return unto him, that striveth with you against your sins, knocking at the door of your hearts to be received, lest the thing that belongs to your eternall peace, be for ever hid from your eyes, and you shut up unto eternall destruction and perdition for ever.

*Thus far have I cleared my conscience, which may be a warning unto you, that you take heed how you any longer follow, or uphold those, which the Lords hand is turned against to throw down, and that you return unto the Lord, and hearken to obey and follow the Light in your consciences, which is given to lead you out of sin and unrighteousness, who desires the eternal peace and salvation of all your souls, that am called of men,*

James Potter.

Winchester prison the  
18th, of the 3d. month 59.

L O N D O N,  
Printed in the 4<sup>th</sup>. month 4<sup>th</sup>. day for M.W. 1659.

15 MAY 1906

